THE

HYPOCRITES *FAST* and FEAST,

not

GOD's HOLY DAY.

HAT-HONOUR to MEN

MAN's INSTITUTION,

not

G O D's.

Presented to the View and Consideration of *Papistical* and *Protestant Time servers* and *Day-observers*, *Will-worshippers* and *Persecutors*; and Satisfaction of the moderate *Inquirer*.

By *George Fox*.

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THE HYPOCRITES *FAST* and FEAST not GOD's HOLY-DAY. HAT-HONOUR to MEN MAN's INSTITUTION, not GOD's.

WHere did ever Christ or his Apostles command any Believers, or Christians to obsetve Holy-dayes, or Feast-dayes; and let us see where it is written in the Scriptures of the New Testament, in the four *Evangelists*, or the Epistles, or the *Revelations*? That ever Christ or his Apostles gave the *Christians* any such Command, that they should observe the time called *Christmas*, or a day for Christ's Birth? Or that they should observe the time called *Easter*, or *Whitesuntide*, or *Peter's*, or *Paul's*, or *Mark's*, or *Luke's* dayes, or any other Saints dayes?

Now you that profess your selves the *Reformed Churches* from the *Papists*, *Jews* and *Heathen*, and the Scriptures to be your Rule, & are Professors of the New Covenant, where do you prove out of the Scriptures of the new Testament that the Apostles & any of the primitive Church practised any such thing, or that Christ or his Apostles gave any such Command to the

Churches, that they ſhould practiſe and obſerve any ſuch days. et us ſee where this Command is written.

For did not the Apoſtle ſay, in his Epiſtle to the *Galatians*, in chapter 4. *But now after ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and Beggerly Elements, whereunto ye deſire again to be in Bondage? Ye obſerve Dayes, and Moneths and Times, and Years; I am afraid of you, leſt I have beſtowed upon you Labour in vain.* And in *Gal.* 3. it is ſaid, *O fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you ſhould not obey the Truth? &c.* And in *Gal.* 5. the Apoſtle exhorts them, *To ſtand faſt in the Liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made them free*; and moreover ſaid, *Be not entangled again with the Yoke of Bondage.*

Now doth not this manifeſt that here were ſome Teachers, that were drawing the Church of the *Galatians* into theſe *Beggerly Elements*, and bringing them again into *Bondage*, in obſerving of *Dayes*, *Moneths*, *Times* and *Years*; for it was the Apoſtles work to bring them out of thoſe Bondages and Beggerly Elements, and therefore when they were going back again into obſerving Dayes, and Moneths, and Times and Years, he was afraid that he had beſtowed his Labour upon them in vain: and he exhorts them to ſtand faſt in the Liberty; wherewith Chriſt Jeſus hath made them free & not to be entangled again with the Yoke of Bondage; AGAIN ſignifies that they had been once intangled with that Yoke of Bondage, and Beggerly Elements.

But O, how are all that are called Chriſtians (ſince the Apoſtles dayes) gone again under this Yoke of Bondage, and theſe beggerly Elements, in obſerving Dayes, Times, Moneths and Years, let their Practice declare! Nay do not both *Papiſts* and *Proteſtants* force People by Laws to obſerve Dayes, and Months, and Times? &c. And therefore is not the Apoſtles Labour and

Travel

Travel bestowed upon *Christendom* in vain, which was to bring People from under such beggerly Elements, and that Yoke of Bondage, which the Law did require, to stand fast in the Liberty, wherewith Christ hath made them free, and not to be entangled again with the Yoke of Bondage. So it was and is Christ that has made, and does make his People free from these things, in the Apostles dayes, and now: And had all *Christendom* kept in this Freedom, they had kept from under this Yoke of Bondage: And therefore they who are redeemed, are to stand fast in the Liberty, wherewith Christ hath made them free: And this Liberty which all true Christians are to stand fast in, they are made free by Christ, and not by man; for man without the Spirit and Mind of Christ seeks to force and compel Christs Followers, and such as he hath made free from the Yoke of Bondage to the outward things that the law commanded, and to the observing of Dayes, and Moneths, and Times, Fasts and Feasts, and Years, such weak and beggerly Elements, them that know God, or are known of God and Christ, He hath made them free, and they are to stand fast in their liberty, and not come under, nor be entangled with the Yoke of Bondage in such things again; for they that are in such things, and would force others to them, are gone from that which gives them the Knowledge of God, and have not stood fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ makes free.

Concerning Prayer.

First, We do not read that ever Christ or his Apostles did compel any to pray or fast, and make a law to strain the Goods of such as would not observe dayes to fast and pray with them; but Christ taught them how they should pray, and be distinct from the Hypocrites, and Christ's words are as followeth; *When thou prayest thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are, for they love*

love to ſtand praying in the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Streets, that they may be ſeen of men, &c. But when thou prayeſt enter into thy Cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret, and thy Father that ſeeth in ſecret, will reward thee openly; but when you pray uſe not vain Repetitions as the Heathen do; for they think that they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking: Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him, &c. So as the Apoſtles and Saints did, ſo do we pray in ſecret, and we pray in publick, &c as the Spirit gives utterance, which helps our Infirmities, as it did the Apoſtles and true Chriſtians; and after this manner we pray for our ſelves, and we pray for all men, both high and low.

Concerning Faſting.

Chriſt ſaith, *Moreover, when ye faſt be not as the Hypocrites, of a ſad Countenance; for they diſfigure their Faces that they may appear unto men to faſt; but when thou faſts anoint thy Head, and waſh thy Face, that thou appear not unto men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret, and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly.*

And likewiſe you may ſee in *Iſaiah* 58. what the true Faſt is the Lord requires, where it is ſaid to the Prophet, *Cry aloud and ſpare not, lift up thy Voice like a Trumpet, and ſhew my People their Tranſgreſſion, and the Houſe of Iſrael their Sins, yet they ſeek me daily, and delight to know my Wayes, as a Nation that did Righteouſneſs, and forſook not the Ordinance of their God; they ask of me the Ordinance of Juſtice they take Delight in approaching to God.*

Wherefore have we faſted ſay they, and thou ſeeſt not? Wherefore have we afflicted our ſouls, and thou takeſt no Knowledge?

Behold, in the Day of your Faſt ye find Pleaſure, and exact all your Labours.

Behold,

Behold, ye fast for Strife and Debate, and to smite with the fist of Wickedniss, ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voices be heard on high: Is it such a Fast that I have chosen? a Day for a man to afflict his Soul? Is it to bow down his Head as a Bulrush, and to spread Sackcloth and Ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a Fast, and an acceptable Day to the Lord?

Is not this the Fast that I have chosen (saith the Lord) *To loose the Bands of Wickedness, to undo the heavy Burdens and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every Yoke?*

So this Fast that the Lord requires, is not to lay yokes and oppress, and lay heavy Burdens, and to make fast the Bands of Wickedness; but to loose and break such things.

And further concerning the true Fast the Lord requires: *Is it not to deal thy Bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy House? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy self from thine own flesh?* (Do you keep this true Fast?) *Then shall the Light break forth as the Morning, and thine Health shall spring forth speedily, and thy Righteousness shall go before thee, the Glory of the Lord shall be thy Rere-ward.—Then shalt thou call and the Lord shall answer, thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am: If thou take away from the midst of thee the Yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking Vanity. And if thou draw out thy Soul to the hungry, and satisfie the afflicted Soul, then shall thy Light rise in Obscurity, and thy Darkness be as the Noon-day, and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfie thy Soul in Drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a Spring of Water, whose Waters fail not, &c.*

Now here is the true Fast the Lord requires of his People, & they that observe this Fast, the Lord saith, When they call he will answer; and you may see what Glorious and Happy Comforts they do receive from the Lord, that keep this true Fast;

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but such as fast for Strife and Debate, and smite with the fists of Wickedness, to make their Voice to be heard on high, and afflict their Souls for a Day, and bow down their head like a Bulrush, and looses not the Bands of Wickedness, and doth not undo every heavy Burden, and break off every yoke, and let the oppressed go free, and doth not deal his Bread to the hungry, and cloth the naked, and bring the poor to his house, but hides himself from his own Flesh and clothes not the naked, such Fasts and Fasters the Lord doth not accept, neither hath he chosen them; but these appear to men with their disfigured faces in bowing down their heads like a Bulrush for a Day, like the Hypocrites to fast, as Christ speaks of in *Mat. 6.* And is it not the Command of Christ, that in their Fast they should not appear unto men to fast? And now you that would force us to shut up our Shops on fasting dayes, or for a Day, doth not this Fast appear unto men? and is not this the Fast that the Lord saith in *Isaiah*, he doth not accept; for he saith, *Is this the Fast that I have chosen, a Day for a man to afflict his Soul, and bow down his Head as a Bulrush?* &c. *wilt thou call this a Fast, and an acceptable Day to the Lord?* Isa. 58.

And therefore all God's People are to keep the true Fast of the Lord, from Debate and Strife, and the Fist of Wickedness, and that Fast that breaks the Bands of Wickedness, and undoes every heavy Burden, and breaks every yoke, and lers the oppressed go free, and deals Bread to the hungry, and clothes the naked, and brings the poor that are cast out, to his own House: So every one that keeps this true Fast, their Health shall grow, and when they call, the Lord will hear them, and the Lord will be their Guide continually, and satisfie their Souls in Drought, and make their Bones fat, and shall be like a watered garden, and like a Spring of Water whose Waters fail not.

Now you that keep not this true Fast, when you call upon the

the Lord on your own Fasting-Dayes, doth the Lord answer you, and say, *Here I am*? (Doth the Lord guide you continually? And are your Bones made fat by him, and your Souls satisfied in Drought? And are you like a watered Garden, and like a Spring, whose waters fail not? But you who keep not this true Fast, do you not want these Waters which fail not? So your Souls are not satisfied in Drought, but your Bones are lean, and you hear not the Voice of the Lord, who saith, *Here I am*; and so you loose the Heritage of *Jacob*, and ride not upon the High Places there, but come under.

And therefore every man and woman, shut your hearts against all manner of Evil whatsoever, and trade not with *Babylon*'s Merchants of Confusion, but keep the supernatural Day of Christ, that is sprung from on high, that is by believing and walking in the Light of Christ, and being grafted into him; and this will bring you to the true Fast, and from feeding upon any Evil, and to the true praying in the Spirit, as Christ and the Apostles have taught, which Fruits of the Spirit is Love, &c. which Birth of the Spirit is not a persecuting Birth; but he that is born of the Flesh, will persecute him that is born of the Spirit, because he will not follow the Birth of the Flesh, with its weak, beggerly Elements, that entangle with its yoke of Bondage, and its observing dayes, moneths, times and years, which the Birth of the Spirit is to stand fast against, in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made it free.

And do you not know the very *Turks* they keep their Sabbath on the sixth day, and the *Jews* on the seventh day, and the Christians meet together on the first day of the Week, and that day which the *Turks* keep, the *Jews* and Christians shops are open, and that day the *Jews* keep, the *Turks* and Christians shops are open; and the first dayes the Christians keep, both *Jews* and *Turks* shops are open: And so the *Turk* doth not

force the *Jews* nor Christians to shut up their shops on their meeting-dayes, but lets them have their Liberty in the *Turks* Counrry.

And where dō you read, that ever the *Turks* forced any Christians to observe any of their Holy-Dayes Fasts or Feasts? and if not, should not Christians be beyond the *Turks*, in giving Liberty to all tender Conscience to serve God, seeing Christ and the Apostles command not, nor force People to observe Holy-Dayes, or Times, or Moneths, or years, but should pray alwayes in the Spirit, and fast alwayes from Strife and Debate, and from all manner of Sin and Evil; and that will keep down the Fist of Wickedness, and the Bond of Iniquity, &c.

And why should not People that be of tender Consciences have their Liberty to exercise their Consciences towards God? that they may have a good Conscience alwayes towards God and man, and to that which God requires, and to do unto all men as they would have them do unto them, & to love their Neighbours as themselves: And seeing there is so many debauched and seared Consciences as with a hot Iron have their Liberty in their loose Lives and Conversations, and in their loose words, whose Tongues are at liberty to swear and curse, and their Spirits are at liberty in Drunkenness and Uncleanness; so let the Magistrates look & see how this evil Conscience hath its liberty, to be exercised in all manner of Evil Things, yea all *Christendom* over, which is a great Shame and Dishonour to God, Christ, Christianity & Humanity: And therefore, why should not God's People have their liberty to exercise their good and tender Consciences towards God and man; for the Mystery of Faith, which Christ Jesus is the author and finisher of, is held in a pure Conscience; and should not the Work of the Christian Magistrates be to encourage the Exercise of this pure Conscience towards God and man, and to discourage the exercise of this evil

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Conſcience, which diſhonours God, Chriſt and true Chriſtianity? If not, how are they a Praiſe to them that do well, and a Terror to evil-doers.

And now concerning *The not Putting off Hats*, for which many that go under the Name of Chriſtians have taken Offence at us, becauſe we could not put off our Hats and bow down to them, for which we find no ſuch command from Chriſt or his Apoſtles, but rather to the contrary; for Chriſt ſaith, *I receive not Honour of man*: Mark, he did not receive Honour of men. And further Chriſt ſaith, *How can ye believe, which recive Honour one of another, and ſeek not the Honour that comes from God only.* Joh. 5.41, 42.

Now Chriſt declares it to be a Mark of an Unbeliever, that ſeeks Honour one of another, and ſeeks not that Honour that comes from God only: And is not the putting off the Hat, and bowing with it, an Honour of men, which they ſeek one of another, and are offended if they have it not? Nay, have they not fined, perſecuted and impriſoned ſome, becauſe they did not put off their Hats to them? Nay, do not the very *Turks* mock at the Chriſtians in their Proverb, ſaying, *That the Chriſtians ſpend moſt of their time in ſhewing their bare Heads one to another*? But ſhould not the *Chriſtians* be beyond the *Turks*, that bear that noble Name of *Chriſtian*, in ſeeking Honour one of another, and perſecuting them that will not give it them? when all true believing *Chriſtians* ſhould ſeek the Honour that comes from God only, which is the Duty of all true Believers in Chriſt Jeſus; for he would not receive Honour of men: And he that believeth on the Son of God hath Ever laſting Life, and he that believeth not the Son of God, ſhall not ſee Life, but the Wrath of God abideth upon him.

And now, is not the *Turks* Proverb a Reproach to the *Chriſtians*? who ſay, that *The Chriſtians ſpend moſt of their time in*

ſhewing their bare Heads one to another; Nay have you not fined and impriſoned many, becauſe that they could not put of their Hats to you, and ſhew you their bare Heads? Nay in many of your courts they ſhall not have Right and Juſtice; and its hard for Apprentices, in ſome Places, to get their Liberty & Freedom in Cities or States, though they have truly ſerved their Time, & are honeſt & civil men, unleſs they will put off their hats & ſhew their bare Heads: And have not ſome of you made a law againſt ſuch as will not put off their hats, and ſhew you their bare heads, yea and to compel and force them to do it, and fine ſuch as do not, *Two Guilders*, as at *Lanſmeer* in *Holland*; in *Waterland*? And is not this the Honour that you ſeek one of another? Did not the *Phariſees* and *Jews* do the ſame.

Now as for your ſaying, the Apoſtle commands *To honour all men, and ſuch as rule well are worthy of double Honour.* Now if this Honouring all men, were to put off the Hat to all men, & ſhew all men their bare Heads, then this command you break your ſelves; for you do not do this to all men generally; and if they that rule well muſt have *Double Hat-honour*, then they muſt put off their Hats twice; and ſhew their bare Heads twice. Now if this Hat-Honour and ſhewing the bare Head be an Invention of man, and not from God, and ye cannot prove it by Scripture, and yet you ſay it is your Rule, then you act beſide the Rule, and compel People to act contrary to your Rule; for where did ever the Prophets, Chriſt or the Apoſtles command any ſuch thing? let us ſee a Command, a Practice or an Example for it.

Nebuchadnezzar who was a Perſecutor, and caſt the *Three Children of Iſrael* into the fire, *With their Hoſe, Cloaks and Hats*, we do not read that he was offended at them, becauſe they did not put off their Hats, and ſhew him their bare Heads, but becauſe they would not bow to his Image. And is it not

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in the Margin of the Bible, where it is ſaid, *Honour all men*, it is ſaid, *Have all men in Eſteem*; then they that rule well are worthy of *Double Eſteem*; and this Eſteem muſt be truly in the Heart, without any Envy, Malice or Hatred, as all men are the Workmanſhip of God, they are to be eſteemed in the Heart, with the Spirit of God; and they that Rule well are worthy of double Eſteem; and here is true Honour from the Heart, both to God and man his Workmanſhip; for People may put off their Hats, and ſhew their bare Heads one to another, and put off their Hats, and ſhew their bare Heads twice to the Officers and to the Megiſtrates, and be full of Envy, and Malice, and Hatred, and Murder in their Hearts one againſt another, and give them that Honour as you call it, and yet ſpeak or wiſh bad things of them, when they have turned their Backs on them, which the true Honour or Eſteem in the Heart to all men as they are God's Creation, is without any evil Wiſh or Thought in the Heart to all men, and to them that rule well, which have the double Eſteem, whom God hath placed over People, there is no Evil in the Heart, that gives this Reſpect, Eſteem or Honour, and brings them to love their Neighbour as themſelves, and to do unto all men, as they would have them do unto them; in that they eſteem all men, and they have a *Double Eſteem* to them that rule well; and that is beyond all the Honour of putting off the Hats once to the Commonality, and twice to them that are worthy of *Double Honour* (as you call it) We would ask the Chriſtians that practiſe the Hat Honour, and ſhew one another the bare Head, who did invent the ſingle Honour and double Honour, that they ſhould put off their Hats one to another, and ſhew one another their bare Heads, ſeeing they cannot prove that ever Chriſt or his Apoſtles did command or practiſe any ſuch thing.

Now concerning Perſecuting, impriſoning and Baniſhing God's

God's People, in whom Christ is manifest, and dwells in their Hearts; doth not Christ tell you, that you imprison him? and then, do not you banish him, and persecute him out of your Cities and Corporations? And how can you enter into his Kingdom, and have a Share of his Kingdom, though you may profess him in words? And did not they go into everlasting Punishment that did not visit Christ in prison, then what will become of you that do banish and imprison him, where he is manifest in his Members, nor suffer them to meet together to enjoy him amongst them, according to his Promise.

And therefore you that will not let Christ reign in his People, and have his Liberty, and exercise his Offices in them, in your Cities and Countries, you will not have your Liberty in Heaven; and you that will not let Christ reign in your Hearts, nor suffer him to reign in his Peoples here upon the Earth, in this World in your Kingdoms, you will not reign with Christ in Heaven in his Kingdom, nor in the World without End.

And so you that banish the Truth out of your Cities or Countries, or his People for its sake, you do banish the Truth and Christ out of your Hearts, from ruling there, and exercising his Kingly, Priestly and Prophetical Office in his People, and so you your selves are not the Temples of God: And then, when you have banished Christ and his Truth out of your own Hearts, then you do banish such in whom he rules out of your States and Countries, and then see what Judgments the Lord doth bring upon you, when you are left to your selves; yea, Fears and Troubles, and one Judgment after another comes upon you, that you are even filled with them; but the banished and Sufferers for Truth and Christ's Sake, have a peaceable Habitation in the Truth, which the Devil is out of and cannot get in, which Habitation will out-last all the Habitations of the Wicked and Persecutors, though they be never so full of

Words

Words without Life and Truth; for the Life and the Truth will out-last all airy Notions, and Christ the Lamb and patient Seed will overcome the Devourer and unpatient Seed; and they that have the Garments, the Righteousness of Christ, which is the fine Linnen, it will out-last all the Rags and Inventions of men; for Christ saith to his Learners, *Be of good cheer, I have overcome the World*, the Persecuting World: And so he said unto his Disciples, *Marvel not if the World hate you; for it hated me before you*.

And therefore let all that professs themselves Christians lay away Persecution about Religion, Churches or Worship, Fasting or Praying-dayes; for you have no command from Christ and his Apostles to persecute any: For Christ who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords when they called him a Deceiver, and blasphemed him, and said he had a Devil, he did not persecute any of them for it, nor force or compel any to hear or believe him, nor the Apostles after him, but he said to them that would have been plucking up the Tares, *Let the Tares and the Wheat grow together until the Harvest*. So you have no Command from Christ or his Apostles, to Persecute, Imprison or Banish, or Spoil the Goods of any, for matter of pure Conscience, and Religion, Worship, Faith and Church, in the Gospel-times.

Amsterdam, in *Holland* the 15th of the 7th Moneth, 1677.

George Fox.

THE END.